

IMEN and INDIANA TEACHER ADVISORY COUNCIL

Saturday, April 19, 2008

Snacks Crossing Elementary School
MSD Pike Township, Indianapolis, Indiana

Present: *Dr. Suellen Reed, Catherine Danyluk, Mark Weaver, Janet Pernell, Theresa Meyer, Dan Kuznik, Tony Willis, Jan Weir, Christine Michael, Mariama Shaheed-Carson, Anna Shults, Jeff Rudkin, Jessica Heidelberg*



Introductions were made by Mark Weaver (Milken 1997 and Teacher of the Year 2004) and teaches at Clay Middle School in Carmel. His school has been undergoing remodeling for the past years (which has just been completed). He has recently come back from three weeks in Japan and has a website where information can be shared among teachers (off the Carmel-Clay township site – special projects). He had the opportunity in Japan to be in an earthquake simulator – particularly appropriate since we just had our 5.2 quake right here in Indiana on Friday on our New Madrid fault!

Cathy Danyluk (coordinator for this meeting) updated the group on some of the members who were unable to be here today (Sarah Powell – who is meeting with Russian teachers today). Cathy shared her work with having a website for those members of the National Guard and families who are left behind – to help the families get through this difficult time while their loved ones are deployed. The website address is

http://www.doe.state.in.us/sservices/resources_military_children.html . She also shared a very cool etymology website (<http://www.freerice.com>) to help kids improve their vocabulary. When kids participate, “rice” is being gathered which will ultimately be given to needy countries.bbbbbbb



Mariama Shaheed-Carson (host for this meeting) presented us with information about her school where she is Assistant Principal – this is her first year in this position just having left the classroom. She really continues to focus on the compassion for classroom teachers and helping them to feel more confident and to support their efforts in the day-to-day issues that arise. She has a particular focus this year with special education students and their parents.

Jeff Rudkin (Batchelor Middle School, Bloomington) spoke about his 2008 Milken Award experience. He said that it was an amazing experience and one that he will never forget. He had the opportunity to meet William Bennett (along with Janet Foley and Lowell Milken). Jeff’s students compiled the information in the softcover book *World War II: A Time for Heroes* and each person attending the meeting was given a copy. Jeff’s students are also working on a new book dealing with the holocaust. He will be speaking next week at Indiana University’s Armstrong award ceremony. Jeff has had the opportunity to visit the Auschwitz camps with his students in



2005 and will be going again in 2010. The kids took video (they all got press passes) and these kids were the only ones who were able to participate in this and were exposed to meeting the international press corps.

Dan Kuznik is the 2008 Indiana Teacher of the Year and he works at Pike High School in the freshman school. He is considering the sabbatical at the Indiana Department of Education next year. He relayed the story about how he prepared his own convocation (however, he didn't realize this at the time) for his award!

Christine Michael (Milken 2007) is science resource teacher at Irwin Elementary School and will be also serving as the technology coordinator this next fall.

Theresa Meyer (Milken 2007) shared her thoughts about the importance of us getting together and sharing our experiences – particularly referencing Maria Schriver's new book *Just Who Will You Be?*



Jessica Heidelberg (Milken 2006) shared her experience getting ready to close Harcourt Middle School (she works currently in Title I) and helping the children to transition in that process – needless to say, it is a challenge!

Tony Willis (Milken 1988) is still working at Carmel High School as an English teacher and is also working one period a day working on school communications projects.

Janet Pernell (Milken 2005) works at Southport High School as a math teacher and personally focuses on those kids who others often forget and those kids who have failed ISTEP. It is clear that she truly loves “being a classroom teacher” and makes those one-on-one connections with kids to help them be better students. Her school will be having their first Cinco de Mayo celebration this year – again, to help kids identify with their heritage.



Anna Shults (Indiana Teacher of the Year 2007) is finishing her tenure with DOE this year and has focused on early literacy (reading, writing, language arts). She is particularly working on the summer reading lists (reading across the curriculum) which will be ready for this summer. She is also working on the Lincoln Bicentennial Celebration which will occur this next fall.

Dr. Reed shared her thoughts that she wants us to “keep up the good works” that we are doing because there is a real and fundamental attack on public education. She discussed the issue of property taxes (4 counties in Marion County had increases in property taxes but the rest of the counties basically had little change) and the influences that the legislative changes in this area are going to make on public education.



Dr. Reed reflected on the new law which requires state approval for all new building projects (even if these projects have already been approved by the local boards and taxpayers) – it is making it more and more difficult to help improve the infrastructure of old and decaying buildings and associated facilities.

Two Million Minutes is a CD (about 60 minutes) (Bob Compton – businessman who produced this) which compared a boy and girl in Indiana, China and India and looking at their schooling experiences. We were encouraged to watch because it gives us a perspective in comparing the public educational experiences in these three countries (some good, some bad). While the American system of education emphasizes creativity and innovation, other countries focus more on hard work and total dedication. There really has to be a “happy medium” between these two ends in order to best educate kids.

Art Levine is offering Woodrow Wilson scholarships (math, science, special education) to encourage/support people from other careers to go into teaching. It really focuses on a realistic experiences for their students enrolled so that we help to ensure that we are best preparing people who are going into teaching.

Dr. Reed also discussed the NCLB states that technology proficiencies are in place and mastered by eighth grade; yet, more schools are cutting technology (software, hardware, personnel to support) as an “incidental” – even though our kids are growing up in this wireless world! How are we going to prepare our students for the global world if the schools (and the teachers) cannot stay ahead of the curve in terms of their education?



Dr. Becky Nicholi (Ivy Tech – Office for Economics and Workforce Development) spoke to the group after lunch. She first discussed the multiple missions of the school (workforce education, transfer, remediation, continuing education, community engagement) and that these missions really are very different than the old image of a vocational and technical school only. They are now emphasizing the comprehensive community school image of themselves and working on getting the message out.

Many people don't know that the Ivy Tech Community College is the nation's largest state-wide community college with a single accreditation (81,000 students enrolled state-wide). Dr. Nicholi discusses the different programs and the kinds of changes that the college is making in order to better meet the needs of their students (both traditional and non-traditional).

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Carroll Weir (Milken 1997)